GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1983
ANSWERED ON:14.03.2017
High Level Working Group Report
Karandlaje Km. Shobha;Simha Shri Prathap

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) the salient features and recommendations made by the High Level Working Group under Dr. Kasturirangan on the Eco-Sensitive Areas (ESAs) in the Western Ghats;
(b) whether the Government has decided to proceed with the recommendations of the report presented by the Committee;
(c) if so, the details of the recommendations that have been adopted, along with the proposed timelines for the implementation of the same;
(d) whether all the stakeholding States in the Western Ghat region have submitted their final views on the draft notification regarding Kasturirangan Report;
(e) if not, the names of States which have not submitted their final views on the draft notification; and
(f) the proposed date for issuance of the final notification on the said report by the Government?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE)

(a) Salient features and recommendations made by the High Level Working Group (HLWG) under Dr. Kasturirangan relate to definition and delimitation of the Western Ghats, identification and demarcation of Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESAs) in the Western Ghats region and regulation/prohibition of certain activities which have maximum interventionist and damaging impacts on the ecosystems of the Western Ghats.

(b) and (c) To provide immediate protection to the Western Ghats and to maintain its environmental integrity, the Government has issued Directions under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 on 13th November 2013. As per the Directions, the five categories of new and/or expansion projects/activities eg (i) Mining, quarrying and sand mining (ii) Thermal Power Plants (iii) Building and construction projects of 20,000 sq. m. area and above (iii) Township and area development projects with an area of 50 ha and above and /or with built up area of 1,50,000 sq.m. and above and (v) Red category of industries identified in the HLWG Report as having maximum impacts on ecosystems are not to be considered for granting Environmental Clearance in the Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA) of Western Ghats.

Further, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has issued a draft Notification on 10.03.2014 declaring an area of 56,825 sq. km spread over six states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Goa, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat in the Western Ghats region as Ecologically Sensitive. The draft Notification was republished on 4.09.2015 superseding the earlier draft Notification. The draft Notification, under its Section (3) (1) (a), (b), (c) & (d), has provision to prohibit certain projects and activities in eco-sensitive areas of Western Ghats which have maximum interventionist and damaging impacts on the Western Ghats eco-system.

(d) and (e) While views have been received from the State Governments of Kerala, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Goa and Gujarat, the State of Tamil Nadu has not submitted their views on the draft notification regarding Kasturirangan Report for declaring eco-sensitive areas in Western Ghats.

(f) On 27th February, 2017 the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, has republished the draft Notification on the Ecologically Sensitive Areas of the Western Ghats superseding the earlier draft Notification. A time limit of 545 days has been provided for finalisation of the same draft Notification.

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